

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully traverse the 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) rejection of claims 5-7 over Keller in view of Lauterbach. At pages 4-5 of the pending Office Action, the Examiner observes correctly that neither reference teaches a spiral vapor current flowing around an axis of the bore, as recited in claim 5, but hypothesizes that one of ordinary skill in the art would attempt this in order to provide a flow of gas at an optimum transverse angle to the plasma spray jet, to remove contaminants.

Applicants traverse this argument as an improper use of the applicants' own teachings as a blueprint to reject the claims, which is impermissible under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

Notwithstanding the above argument, even if it were obvious to attempt to optimize the transverse angle of the flow, there is no teaching or suggestion in either reference to modify the structure to include a pair of suction passages to generate the spiral current, such passages being offset from the axis of the bore in opposite directions, as recited, *e.g.*, in amended claim 1. Accepting, solely for the sake of argument, the Examiner's position regarding the references, amended claim 5 and its dependent claims 6 and 7, still are not obvious under § 103(a).

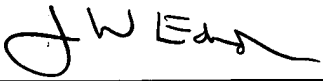
In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants request reconsideration of the application, and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: February 13, 2006

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